

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2399
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL THESALONIKI
AMCONSUL TRIESTE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 6219

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT YO US PGOV PROP
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH DJILAS

1. ON EVE OF KARKELJ VISIT, HIS FORMER FRIEND AND NOW DISSIDENT
RIVAL MILOVAN DJILAS WELCOMES PROSPECT OF KARKELJ'S DIALOGUE
WITH PRESIDNET CARTER AND RECOMMENDS FRAMEWORK FOR NEW
ADMINISTRATION TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN
EURPOE. THE FOLLOWING IS BASED ON CONVERSATION POLCOUNS HAD
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WITH DJILAS ON SEPTEMBER 15.

2. DJILAS, WHO WAS WITH KARDELJ DURING HIS LAST VISIT TO
THE UNITED STATES IN THE EARLY 50'S, WAS VERY PLEASE TO
LEARN THAT KARDELJ WILL BE SEEING PRESIDENT CARTER AND
OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION THIS MONTH. HE
CHARAGTERIZED KARDELJ AS THE "BEST, MOST RATIONAL AND

LIBERAL MAN IN THE LEADERSHIP OF YUGOSLAVIA." DJILAS EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT AFTER TITO YUGOSLAVIA WOULD TURN IN A MORE LIBERAL DIRECTION AND HE HOPED THAT KARDELJ WOULD BE THE MAN IN CHARGE AT THAT TIME. ON THE OTHER HAND, DJILAS WAS DISAPPOINTED WITH WHAT HE TERMED KARDELJ'S COMPROMISES WITH DOGMATIC FORCES IN THE PARTY IN WATERING DOWN REAL MEANING OF HIS CONCEPT "SELF-MANAGING PLURALISM". DJILAS WAS AFRAID THAT THE PARTY MIGHT BECOME EVEN STRONGER IN THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AHEAD. AT THE SAME TIME HE CHARACTERIZED THE ATMOSPHERE HERE AS BETTER NOW THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE 1971. HE THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS ONLY PARTLY DUE TO FACT CSCE MEETING HERE AND NOT TIED TO ITS DURATION. HE STILL HOPES FOR AT LEAST PARTIAL AMNESTY OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ON NOVEMBER 29.

3. MAIN POINT DJILAS WANTED TO MAKE WAS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY AND NECESSITY TO DEMONSTRATE CREATIVITY IN EUROPE, TO FIND WAYS TO IDENTIFY WITH THE MAINSTREAM OF GENUINE DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF THE CENTER LEFT WHICH ARE TRYING TO SOLVE DEEP SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN EUROPE. SUCH CREATIVITY IS REQUIRED NOT ONLY TO BRIDGE THE IDEOLOGICAL GAP BETWEEN AMERICA AND WESTERN EUROPE AND THUS TO STRENGTHEN EXISTING DEMOCRATIC FORCES, IT IS ALSO THE ONLY WAY TO WEAKEN THE SOVIETS' HOLD ON EASTERN EUROPE
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AND TO BRING ABOUT LIBERALIZATION WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION ITSELF. THE UNITED STATES MUST BE PERCEIVED AS SUPPORTING RATHER THAN OPPOSING NECESSARY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INNOVATION IN EUROPE. THIS IS MAIN CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE TO STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. DJILAS FOUND KISSINGER'S LECTURE ON EUROPEAN COMMUNISM HAD EXEMPLARY INTERNAL LOGIC BUT WAS WRONG IN TERMS OF EUROPEAN REALITIES. VAST MAJORITY OF EUROPEANS HAVE ACCEPTED WORD "SOCIALISM" TO DESCRIBE THEIR FUTURE -- EVEN THOUGH THIS TERM IS NOW NEARLY DEVOID OF CONCRETE MEANING. UNLIKE KISSINGER, PRESIDENT CARTER MUST COME TO GRIPS WITH THIS FACT. DJILAS STATES THAT HE IS CONVINCED THE SPANISH COMMUNIST PARTY IS FOR A PLURALISTIC, MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY. THE ITALIAN PARTY IS CONFUSED BUT DEMOCRATIC ROOTS ARE ALSO EVIDENT THERE. THE FRENCH PARTY IS A DIFFERENT CASE AND IS ESSENTIALLY STILL DOGMATIC.

4. POLCOUNS SUGGESTED THAT TO BRIDGE RATHER ARTIFICIAL IDEOLOGICAL GAP BETWEEN SUPPOSEDLY CAPITALIST AMERICA AND A SUPPOSEDLY SOCIALIST EUROPE WHEN ALL OUR COUNTRIES HAVE STRONG PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS WE NEED NEW TERM -- KEY ISSUES NOW ARE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND CONCRETE

PROGRESS. PRESENT RHETORIC ONLY OBSCURES REAL LIFE CONCERNS. TERM "SOCIAL DEMOCRACY" MIGHT BE THEME AROUND WHICH WE COULD ALL RALLY. DJILAS COUNTERED WITH TERM "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM" AS BRIDGE NOT ONLY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC BUT ALSO TO REACH OUT TO INTELLECTUALS AND PARTY MEMBERS IN EAST. HE ARGUED THAT SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAD DISCREDITED THEMSELVES AT VARIOUS TIMES IN THIS CENTURY IN PROGRESSIVES' EYES. POLCOUNS OBJECTED THAT TERM "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM" WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR MAJORITY OF AMERICANS TO APPLY TO THEIR OWN SYSTEM. DJILAS' CONCLUSION WAS THAT EVEN FOR AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS TO BEGIN USING DIFFERENT TERMS "SOCIAL DEMOCRACY" AND "DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM" TO APPLY TO EACH OTHER WOULD BE MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH AND BEING US
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SUBSTANTIALLY CLOSER THAN PRESENT IMPASSE OF CAPITALISM VS. SOCIALISM/COMMUNISM. HE HOPED CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THIS APPROACH IN SPEECHES AND IN CONVERSATION WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS. HE APPLAUDED PRESIDENT CARTER'S UNDERSTANDING THAT IDEAS AND IDEALS ARE AT LEAST AS SIGNIFICANT AS GUNS IN AFFAIRS OF MEN AND IN DETERMINING A NATION'S INFLUENCE AND STATURE. IN THIS CONNECTION HE SPECIFICALLY WELCOMED BRZEZINSKI VIEW THAT WE SHOULD WORRY LESS ABOUT SOVIET UNION -- WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "DECAYING" SOCIETY WITH NOTHING EXCEPT MILITARY STRENGTH TO OFFER. HE ARGUED THAT DEMOCRATIC FORCES POTENTIALLY VERY STRONG BUT NOW NEED INTELLECTUAL PARTICIPATION OF UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE NEW FRAMEWORK.
EAGLEBURGER

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